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J.S.

NSC
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5 August 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

SUBJECT : Proposal for an Operational Analysis Group to Support
the NSC

1. Gordon Gray met with State, Defense, OCDM, and CIA Planning Board representatives on 4 August to discuss initial reactions to Garrison Norton's proposal that IDA create a special group to assist the NSC machinery (Gray and Norton letters at Tab).

2. The Institute of Defense Analysis (IDA) is a private corporation drawing on the talent of seven technical schools and colleges, set up originally to help the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group. Its past work has been mostly in the field of operational and strategic evaluation of weapons systems. Norton's proposal is that IDA now establish a relatively small group (say 20) which would provide analyses of policy problems, primarily in the "political, economic, and sociological" fields. Presumably it would undertake such studies only upon request and its reports would be available only to the NSC.

3. Mr. Gray has been quite sensitive to outside criticism of the NSC machinery and has been casting about for ways to strengthen it. At the meeting it was obvious that he thought the idea of some such quasi-private supporting group (not necessarily IDA) should be carefully explored. However, State and Defense tended to throw cold water on the proposal,

Defense contending that IDA might be diverted from its important work for the Pentagon. I took a neutral position, after having checked with General Cabell. Since neither State nor Defense had yet checked with their principals, they have been asked to do so.

4. On the basis of some experience, I feel that independent analyses of policy problems by a group like IDA could be of value in selected cases. They would tend to be more forthright and imaginative in their attack on policy problems, which could serve as a desirable prod to the operating agencies. On the other hand, a largely academic group, even fully cleared, would inevitably lack the experience with and feel for the many operating problems which often make otherwise sound courses of action impracticable. Moreover, "political, economic and sociological" problems are by their very nature less susceptible to operations analysis techniques than those involving military matters or weapons systems. While I would agree that the policy papers prepared for the NSC should be better focussed on key issues and clearly present major alternatives, I question whether an outside group could contribute as much to this end as could, say, a beefing up of the NSC staff itself, or a strengthening of the planning staffs of the major agencies.

5. There has been no substantive DDI or DDP objection to the proposal from an intelligence standpoint. A group of this type would probably tend to be a consumer of ours rather than a competitive purveyor of intelligence or operational judgments.

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6. Hence, I recommend that we take a neutral but not negative attitude toward the IDA proposal, letting the policy-forming agencies, chiefly State and Defense, do the arguing pro and con. While the importance of the NSC process is such that anything which would contribute even marginally to its effectiveness bears careful investigation, a much closer look at precisely how an operations analysis group could help in policy formulation is desirable before any such proposal as IDA's should be accepted.

R. W. KOMER

3 August 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

SUBJECT : Proposal for an Operational Analysis Group to Support NSC

1. Gordon Gray has written you, Mr. Hoegh, and the Secretaries of State and Defense asking your reactions to a proposal for an operations analysis group to back up the NSC machinery (see tab). Since taking up his job Mr. Gray has been quite sensitive to the growing criticism of the NSC machinery, and has been casting about for ways to beef it up. He has discussed the problem at Planning Board several times, and I believe that it was he who approached Garrison Norton of IDA rather than the opposite.

2. The Institute of Defense Analysis (IDA) is a private corporation set up originally to do analyses for the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group under the JCS. Its past work has been mostly in the field of operational and strategic evaluation of weapons systems. Norton's proposal is that IDA now establish a relatively small group (say 20) which would provide analyses of policy problems, primarily in the "political, economic, and sociological" fields. Presumably it would undertake such studies only upon request and its reports would be available only to the NSC and member agencies.

3. In selected cases a reasonably independent analysis of the type which a good operations analysis/^{group} could give would be of real value.

The NSC machinery has been repeatedly criticized as producing no more

than an amalgam of competing agency views, with ~~all~~ the inevitable watering down involved. An independent analysis of selected policy problems would tend to be less defensive in tone and more imaginative. It could provide a prod to the major agencies. On the other hand, "political, economic, and sociological" problems are by their very nature less susceptible to operations analysis techniques than those involving weapons systems. Moreover, while groups like IDA draw upon a large reservoir of academic and other talent outside the government (with all necessary clearances), it is questionable whether such a group would have the same intimate knowledge of the problems involved, and hence could come up with as useful a product could, say, a small planning and analysis group within the NSC staff itself.

4. As to the merits of IDA, it enjoys a good reputation (the Draper Committee has used it extensively and either General Draper or Abe Lincoln might be able to provide some insights as to its effectiveness on a fairly complex type of policy problem like military aid). One possible objection is that IDA is too closely tied to Defense via WSEG (it has also done work for NSA and ARPA), and thus might be less objective than desirable. However, this objection would apply to any existing operations analysis group, e.g. RAND, ORO, SRI, etc.

5. A quick check indicates no substantive DDI or DDP objections to the proposal from an intelligence standpoint. A group of this type would probably tend to be a consumer of ours rather than a competitive purveyor of intelligence or operational judgments.

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6. Hence, it might be best to take initially a reasonably forthcoming attitude toward the IDA proposal, letting the major policy-forming agencies such as State and Defense do most of the arguing pro and con. Mr. Gray seems to be for the proposal, and the importance of the NSC process is such that anything which would contribute even marginally to its effectiveness bears careful investigation. In my opinion, however, a much closer look at how an operations analysis group could really help in policy formulation is desirable before endorsing any such proposal as IDA's.

R. W. KOMER

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